

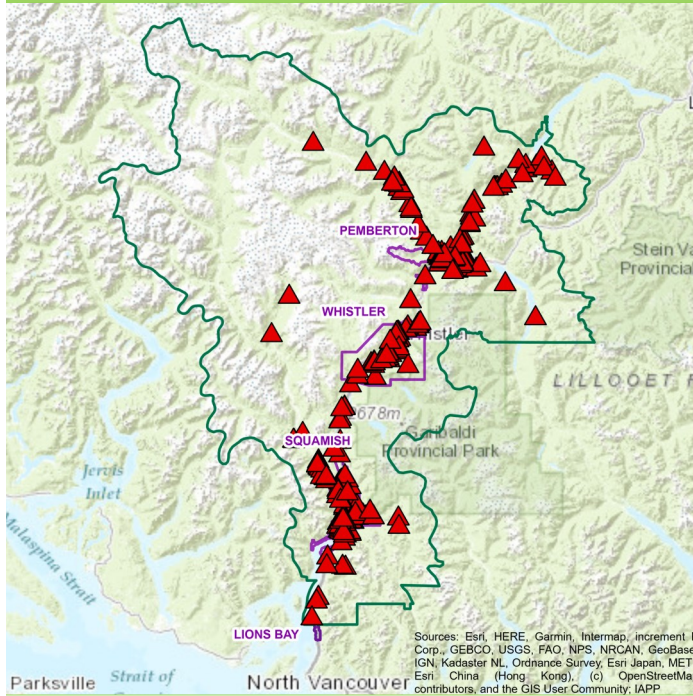
Common Burdock

Arctium minus



Squamish: Strategic Control | Whistler: Strategic Control | Pemberton: Strategic Control

DISTRIBUTION



IDENTIFICATION



Flowers: Common Burdock has purple flowers on green circular burs with hooked, prickly bristles. Eventually, the flowers mature into brown burs which stick to everything. These clingy burs were actually the inspiration for Velcro!

Leaves: In the first year the leaves form a rosette. The basal leaves are large, heart-shaped, wavy, and rhubarb-like; the upper leaves are alternate with wavy edges; the underside of the leaves is woolly.

Stems: After the rosette year, Common Burdock grows an upright, grooved, and highly branched flower-bearing stem up to 3 m high.

Roots: Common Burdock has a thick, fleshy taproot.

Seeds: Oblong, about 6 mm long, mottled and ridged

Similar Species:

- **Great Burdock (*Arctium lappa*)**, is quite rare in Southern BC, and is listed as a regionally noxious weed. It has solid lower leaf stalks and it's flowers are larger than Common Burdock's.
- **Cocklebur (*Xanthium strumarium*)**, which has smaller, spiny leaves.



Origin: Was unintentionally introduced from Eurasia and first reported in North America in 1638.

Habitat: Thrives in the moist, fertile, nitrogen-rich soils of disturbed areas such as roads, ditches, and riparian areas.

Reproduction: Common Burdock plants can live up to 4 years and produce 6,000 to 16,000 seeds per plant. Seeds are shed continuously throughout the fall, winter and following spring. Most seeds germinate in early spring.

Common Burdock is generally considered a biennial plant: it forms a rosette of leaves in the first year, and flowers in its second year before dying off. However, observations in the Whistler area show that some plants are adopting a perennial life cycle.

Interesting fact: Common Burdock root is sometimes used as a natural remedy, as diuretic or as a source of antioxidants. It is also used in Japanese cuisine.

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Vectors of Spread: Burred seeds stick to animals, clothing, and gear, and can easily be carried to un-infested areas.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Common Burdock is found throughout the Sea to Sky Region, so PREVENTION of further spread is key:

- Regularly monitor properties for infestations.
- Ensure soil and gravel is uncontaminated before transport.
- Don't unload, park, or store equipment or vehicles in infested areas.
- Remove plants, plant parts, and seeds from personal gear, clothing, pets, vehicles, and equipment.
- Bag or tarp plants and seeds before transporting to a designated disposal site (e.g., landfill). **DO NOT COMPOST.**
- Maintain and establish healthy plant communities that are resistant to invasion by Burdock.

Common Burdock can be controlled by:

- **Mechanical Control:** While sources typically recommend severing the taproot below the root crown to kill the plant at the first year (rosette) stage, this is rarely done properly, leading to greatly diminished efficacy with this approach. A better approach is to **remove the taproot in its entirety by digging it up.** Cutting above-ground vegetation when the plant is in its second year of growth can be a stopgap control method, but carefully consider the timing of mechanical control efforts: cutting Burdock after seedheads develop compounds the problem and risks spreading the seeds. Burdock also tends to regrow and branch out when the leaves are cut but the taproot is not removed. Remove all plant material from the site to avoid Burdock's allelopathic effects. Lastly, remove all seed heads, including previous years', and dispose of in sealed garbage bags with household waste.
- **Chemical Control:** Foliar herbicides are rarely used on Common Burdock because of the effectiveness of repeated mechanical removal. Burdock can be controlled with 2,4-D, picloram, dicamba, or glyphosate, but note that picloram is not suitable in wet, coastal soils. Herbicides are most effective when applied to first-year rosettes. We recommend that any herbicide application is carried out by a person holding a valid BC Pesticide Applicator Certificate. Before selecting and applying herbicides, you must review and follow herbicide labels and application rates; municipal, regional, provincial and federal laws and regulations; species-specific treatment recommendations, and site-specific goals and objectives.
- **Biological Control:** There is no official form of biocontrol.
- **Integrated Control:** Integrated management efforts must include the elimination of seed production and the depletion of the seed bank. Regardless of the control method(s) used, it is paramount to also remove all seedheads; note that it will likely take several years to exhaust the seed bank.

If you suspect you have found Common Burdock anywhere in the Sea to Sky region:

Contact the Sea to Sky Invasive Species Council to report and for the most recent, up to date control methods.

References: Alberta Invasive Species Council, CABI, Coastal Invasive Species Committee, Colorado State Parks, E-flora BC, Government of BC, Invasive Species Council of BC, Invasive Species Council of Manitoba, Government of BC, Leslie Anthony, Montana State University, Pacific Northwest Pest Management Handbooks, Washington State University.

IMPACTS

Ohio-nature.com

Ecological:

- **Burdock's large leaves can outshade and outcompete native plants.**
- **If left to decompose on site, Burdock's leaves display allelopathic properties and prevent native species from germinating.**
- **There have been occasional incidences where birds and bats have become entangled in the burs and died.**
- **Common Burdock creates suitable environments for other invasive species in the same native range, such as Bitter Dock.**

Economic:

- **Common Burdock hosts powdery mildew and root rot which can spread to farmers' crops.**
- **Common Burdock crowds out forage grasses in pastures**
- **Livestock willingly graze it, which taints milk products.**
- **Burs can become entangled in horses' manes and sheep's wool, damaging their quality and reducing their value.**



REPORT SIGHTINGS

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